

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 2, 4 and 10 have been amended, claims 20-21 have been added and claims 3 and 13 have been canceled without prejudice by the present Amendment. Amended claims 1, 2, 4 and 10 and new claims 20-21 do not introduce any new subject matter.

ALLOWED CLAIM AND ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's allowance of claim 19 and the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 2-4 and 11-13.

The Examiner objects to claims 2-4 and 11-13 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, and indicates that claims 2-4 and 11-13 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base and any intervening claims.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the Examiner's objection to claims 2-4 and 11-13 as being dependent upon rejected base claims. In response to the Examiner's objection, Applicant has canceled claim 3 and amended claim 1 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 3 and has canceled claim 13 and amended claim 10 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 13.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1 and 10 and claims 2 and 4 and claims 11-12 respectively dependent thereon are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objection to claims 2, 4 and 11-12, claims 3 and 13 having been canceled.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the rejection of claims 1, 5, 6, 8 and

9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,418,046 ("Naji").

Applicant has amended claim 1 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 3. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is not anticipated by Naji and is in condition for allowance. For at least the reason that claims 5, 6, 8 and 9 depend from claim 1, claims 5, 6, 8 and 9 are also submitted not to be anticipated by Naji and to be in condition for allowance.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 1, 5, 6, 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the rejection of claims 10, 14, 15, 17 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,788,568 ("Hidaka").

Applicant has amended claim 10 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 13. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 10 is not anticipated by Hidaka and is in condition for allowance. For at least the reason that claims 14, 15, 17 and 18 depend from claim 10, claims 14, 15, 17 and 18 are also submitted not to be anticipated by Hidaka and to be in condition for allowance.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 10, 14, 15, 17 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the rejection of claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Naji in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,600,690 ("Nahas").

As stated above, Applicant has amended claim 1 to incorporate the allowable

subject matter of claim 3. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentable over Naji in view of Nahas and is in condition for allowance. For at least the reason that claim 7 depends from claim 1, claim 7 is also submitted to be patentable over Naji in view Nahas and to be in condition for allowance.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the rejection of claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hidaka in view of Nahas.

As stated above, Applicant has amended claim 10 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 13. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 10 is patentable over Hidaka in view of Nahas and is in condition for allowance. For at least the reason that claim 16 depends from claim 10, claim 16 is also submitted to be patentable over Hidaka in view Nahas and to be in condition for allowance.

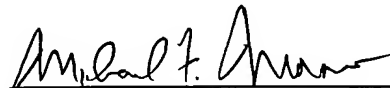
Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

NEW CLAIMS

Applicant respectfully submits new claims 20-21 for examination and that new claims 20-21 are patentable over the cited references.

An early and favorable reconsideration is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner has any further questions or comments, the Examiner may telephone Applicant's Attorney to reach a prompt disposition of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael F. Morano", is written over a horizontal line.

Michael F. Morano
Reg. No. 44,952
Attorney for Applicant

F. CHAU & ASSOCIATES, LLC
130 Woodbury Road
Woodbury, NY 11797
(516) 692-8888